

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6676

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 5460

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SN, TH

SUBJ: THAI PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE

BEGIN SUMMARY: HIGHLIGHTS OF THAI PRIME MINISTER THANIN'S DECEMBER 2-3 VISIT TO SINGAPORE INCLUDE A SEVENTY MINUTE MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW AND OTHER GOS OFFICIALS, AND A PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH HE PLEDGED TO CRUSH COMMUNIST INSURGENTS. IN THEIR JOINT PRESS STATEMENT, THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS REITERATED SUPPORT FOR ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND AGREED TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING LAST TUESDAY'S MEETING IN PENANG WITH MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN -- HIS FIRST VENTURE OUT OF THAILAND SINCE TAKING OFFICE A MONTH AGO -- THAI PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIVICHEN CONTINUED HIS INFORMAL ASEAN VISITS WITH A TWO-DAY STAY IN SINGAPORE DECEMBER 2 AND 3. AFTER WHAT THE STRAITS TIMES CALLED "ONE OF THE BRIEFEST AND MOST INFORMAL" AIRPORT RED-CARPET CEREMONIES EVER, THANIN AND HIS 18-MEMBER DELEGATION WERE WHISKED TO THE ISTANA FOR LUNCH AND A 70-MINUTE MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW, WHO WAS FLANKED BY GOH KENG SWEE, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE; HON SUI SEN, MINISTER OF FINANCE; FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM; UNCLASSIFIED

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AND K.C. LEE, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. ACCOMPANYING

THANIN WERE UPADIT PACHARIYANGKAN, FOREIGN MINISTER; AIR MARSHAL PERM LIMPISAWAT, MINISTER OF INDUSTRY; KHUNYING LERSAK SAMBATSIRI, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS; AND GENERAL KRIANGSAK, DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE LATTER, THOUGH LISTED NO. 5 IN THE DELEGATION, WAS DESCRIBED AS THE "STRONGMAN" OF THE TEAM: ACCORDING TO THE NEW NATION, HE IS THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND SPOKESMAN OF THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM COUNCIL, THE GROUP WHICH SEIZED POWER IN OCTOBER. HIS PRESENCE LED THE STRAITS TIMES TO CHARACTERIZE THE DELEGATION AS ONE WITH A "STRONG SECURITY FLAVOR". FOLLOWING THESE TALKS (THE FIRST MEETING EVER BETWEEN THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS), THERE WERE SEPARATE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE COUNTERPART MINISTERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS. LEE KUAN YEW LATER THAT EVENING HOSTED A DINNER FOR THE THAI DELEGATION AT THE MANDARIN HOTEL.

2. ON DECEMBER 3 THANIN CALLED ON PRESIDENT SHEARES AND HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE ISTANA. HE PLEDGED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CRUSH COMMUNIST INSURGENTS, BOTH ON THAILAND'S NORTHEASTERN BORDER AND ALONG THE THAI-MALAYSIAN BORDER, WHERE THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAD REACHED "PERFECT HARMONY" ON THIS OBJECTIVE. HE ALSO STATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PAY GREATER ATTENTION TO ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT BY CUTTING RED TAPE AND IMPROVING PUBLIC FACILITIES. IMPRESSED WITH SINGAPORE'S EFFORTS IN THESE AREAS, HE SAID THAT HIS DELEGATION HAD CANCELLED THE MORNING'S SIGHTSEEING TOURS IN ORDER TO TALK FURTHER WITH GOS OFFICIALS, AND THAT WORK TEAMS WOULD BE SENT TO STUDY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY SINGAPORE'S APPROACH TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING AND TRAFFIC CONTROL, SOMETIME SOON.

3. IN THEIR JOINT PRESS STATEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT, THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS REITERATED THEIR SUPPORT FOR ASEAN AND ITS BASIC OBJECTIVES AND FOR CONTINUED ECONOMIC COOPERATION, BOTH INTERNALLY, WITH OTHER NATIONS, AND WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. NOTING THEIR MUTUAL INTEREST IN EACH OTHER'S ECONOMIC WELL-BEING, THEY AGREED TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS, EXPRESSING CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE JOINT VENTURE PROPOSALS IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCE. THEY ALSO PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUBMARINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINK. HOLDRIDGE

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